

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - January 7, 2008

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Manuel Arturo Villarreal-Heredia, a former senior lieutenant in the narcotics trafficking Arellano-Felix Organization (AFO), was sentenced today in federal court in San Diego by United States District Court Judge Larry A. Burns to serve thirty years in prison and to forfeit \$5 million. Villarreal-Heredia pled guilty in September 2007 to operating an enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity and conspiring to invest illicit drug profits.

In his guilty plea, Villarreal-Heredia admitted that as one of the senior lieutenants serving under Francisco Javier Arellano-Felix, the former leader of the AFO, they routinely wiretapped rival drug traffickers and Mexican law enforcement officials; impersonated Mexican military and law enforcement officials; trained assassination squads; "taxed" individuals seeking to conduct criminal activities in Tijuana and Mexicali; kidnaped individuals for ransom; imported and distributed ton quantities of cocaine and marijuana; and

tortured and killed people. In November 2007, Francisco Javier Arellano-Felix was sentenced to serve life in prison.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 06cr2646-LAB

Manuel Arturo Villarreal-Heredia

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Count 1 - Title 18, United States Code, Section 1962(c) –
Conducting the Affairs of an Enterprise Through a Pattern of Racketeering Activity

Count 2 - Title 18, United States Code, Section 854(a) and 846 –
Conspiracy to Invest Illicit Drug Profits

Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1972(a) and 1963 - Criminal Forfeiture

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

Drug Enforcement Administration
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations
California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement